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JUNE 2, 2023 | VOLUME 14 | ISSUE 12

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A local look at trans people in
homeless shelters. **Page 4**



ASK YOUR
VENDOR: WHO
DO YOU MOST
ADMIRE?

TERESA BASHAM, #570

GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

trans rights
respect
asexuality
healthcare
gender
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shelter

2023 PRIDE
ISSUE

community
transitions
safety
love

Mural by Joey Salamon

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM



@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

from the **DIRECTOR's DESK**



In June 2022, Groundcover News published a special edition for Pride Month. This was the first of its kind for Groundcover. Although the publication had published LGBTQ+ articles and content before, never had the organization taken a concerted action intentionally marketed as such. Almost every piece was written by or centered LGBTQ+ people or issues in the local community. (Spoiler: we did it again

this year, and you're holding it!) On the day after its print release, I overheard a conversation about trans people in the Groundcover office that, in an attempt to be humorous, was extremely hurtful. I stepped in to open up a conversation about the statement I heard, to inform those in the conversation how that might be understood as an offense, a slur or an invalidation of personhood. We talked about what the consequences are to sell this paper, and speak hate, even if out of ignorance, as a representative of Groundcover News. The intersection of homelessness experience and LGBTQ+ identity is an important one. LGBTQ+ — especially transgender — people have a higher risk of becoming homeless due to stereotypes, transphobia, hatred and systemic oppression. Navigating the system of welfare and survival as a trans

person often includes lack of privacy, lack of belonging, physical violence, misgendering, trauma and re-traumatizing experiences. Yet, very few people in our workplace — a workplace for people experiencing homelessness — identify as LGBTQ+. It was a wake up call that the Groundcover News vendor base is not a perfect sample of the homeless experience as many members of our community assume. Certainly we have a diverse and unique group of vendors and writers who challenge stereotypes everyday out on the street and in their writing. Anyone with lived experience of homelessness and poverty can sell Groundcover News, but that doesn't necessarily mean everyone with this experience does. Selling Groundcover means constantly being in the public eye, and being in a position to be ignored or embraced or even reviled,

over and over again. I thought a lot about what it means for Groundcover News to publish another Pride Issue: to speak on behalf of, and to defend, an identity that most who work for Groundcover do not hold. Instead of avoiding this lack of representation by not publishing a Pride Issue this year, we chose to do it again, expanding the contributor base and owning the reality that we have an obligation as a street paper to cover these issues and spotlight the people, organizations and ideas that are making the community a better place for *everyone*. Because to understand the intersection of queerness and homelessness is to better understand homelessness. And to challenge stereotypes of being gay, trans or asexual is to challenge stereotypes of poverty. Our liberation is bound up with one another.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

CREATING **OPPORTUNITY** AND A **VOICE** FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE WHILE TAKING ACTION TO END HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed. Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for \$2, keeping all income and tips from each sale. Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

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ASK YOUR VENDOR

Who in this world do you most admire?

Billie Holiday. Despite all she went through, she still was able to do what she did, achieve what she achieved. My favorite song of hers is "Blue Moon." — Teresa Basham, #570

In my lifetime, MLK. Among the living , the 17th Karmapa. — Ken Parks, #490

Jesus. — Gary Robinson, #224

Dead: Jonas Salk, Living: Neil deGrasse Tyson. — Markona Love, #590

Jesus. — Tony Schohl, #9

I respect everyone. — Roberto Caballero, #347

Stevie Wonder. — Felicia Wilbert, #234

Susan Beckett, for what she did for Groundcover and her vision for the organization. Glenn Gates, for his hard work and dedication. — Joe Woods, #103

Lindsay. — James Tennant, #174

My dad, for all the sacrifices he made throughout the years. And Glenn! — Dan Wilcox, #592

What would YOU ask?

If you have a question you would like Groundcover vendors to answer in this column, email us at contact@groundcovernews.com

We will be featuring vendor responses in future issues.

Transitions since Groundcover

DANIELLE MACK
Groundcover vendor No. 5

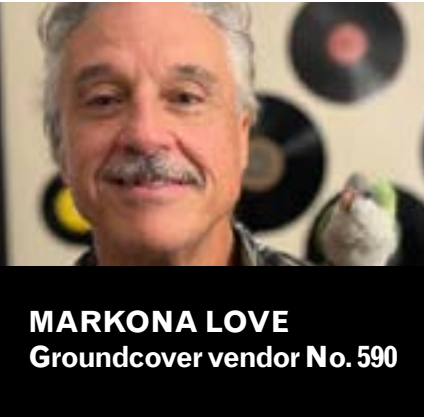
Happy Pride Month to everyone! I hope you are enjoying what seems to be the end of spring and the beginning of summer. I have not written an article since I left Michigan to get married back in 2013 to another trans woman named Shelley. A lot has happened since Shelley and I were married in Massachusetts, and quickly moved to California, her favorite place to live. After a few years I got a job with TSA, and just as I was finishing up my training with TSA, Shelley passed away. We had made plans to move to Seattle at the end of that year, plans that I followed through with. I was born in Seattle so that area is home to me. Shelley had lived there before and liked it. With my federal job I could transfer anywhere in the country. I transferred to Seattle in 2017. I loved living in Seattle, but eventually my parents and I started talking again and I chose to move back to Michigan to try and speed up the reconnection. My dad's side of the family has been in Michigan since 1865, and aside from kindergarten, all my schooling has been in Michigan; but after so much time on the west coast, I felt a lot of culture shock moving back to Michigan in 2018. I quickly realized my parents and

I get along better with a thousand miles between us and I wanted to get back to Seattle. Unfortunately I ran into some bigotry and transphobia working at the Grand Rapids airport. I filed complaints and did everything I could but never heard anything back from headquarters. They tried to fire me at that airport, but thanks to some help from the union I was able to instead get forced into a transfer to a position and airport I didn't really want. In 2019, I was transferred to Washington D.C., where I was eventually able to get things worked out to get back to working as an officer and start working my way back to Seattle. At the end of that year I was able to get a transfer to Denver. I loved Denver! I had my voice surgery to raise my pitch and trachea shave to reduce the size of my Adam's apple done in Denver. In 2021, I transferred to Las Vegas for six months, then back up to Seattle. I eventually left TSA shortly after moving back to Seattle and found a job using my degree to work for the public schools. I worked for Seattle Public Schools for about a year and a half as a special education teaching assistant, aka paraeducator. My first year on the job I had a great team that I loved working with, but at the end of the last school year

the teacher decided to try something else. We got a new teacher that did not seem to like me too much, and proceeded to make my work environment very stressful. I panicked a bit and instead of requesting a transfer to another school I just quit and decided to try working for the federal government again, for the United States Postal Service. I hated that job, decided it wasn't for me very quickly and I just went back onto teaching. I left USPS before my probationary period ended and was jobless for about six weeks before I got hired by the same school district I started kindergarten in up near Everett, just north of Seattle. After all this time I know I want to live and work near Everett. Last fall I managed to acquire my dream car, a 1993 GMC Sierra K1500 half-ton pickup truck, that I am still making payments on. I am working my dream job, and currently only casually looking for my dream house up near Everett. Unfortunately I am in a bit of a rough patch as I don't get my first paycheck from this new job until the end of next month and I am already behind on quite a few bills and struggling to make it to that first paycheck. I am trying all sorts of things to help myself, but keep running into problems. There is an end to the stresses in sight. Now I just need to get there.

Back in the crack

The light was only peeking out, but at least I could see it, in the distance — barely — from the pit, where Uncle Sam wants me/us. It's getting crowded down here — as the low-income, disenfranchised population increases daily. There isn't even talk of any real solution, let alone any positive action. They can't seem to even slow down the spread of disparity. "The Crack" is the fissure that is seemingly impossible for the lower class to step out of, and what the middle class is falling into ... a never ending, bottomless pit of despair. More jobs have more expenses and complications. How many jobs does it take to afford to live in a tent by the railroad tracks? ... four. Yep. How do you get out of a locked box?! Where's Houdini when you need him? With all the time and energy the government spends



creating those walls and locking your box then hiding the key, you would think that they would have just housed people instead. I could explain how each one of those walls were created and how they contained me, but it would be futile. I'm more interested in the ways of the 'winds of change.' Ya, I know, that's vague ...

But what's the point in wasting any more breath on the details of how the system screws us? Let's start acting as a compassionate community. Government is not going to save us, it's way too concerned with self-preservation. We need to come together, work together ... for each other. We the people need to see ourselves as a whole, as One — and start from there. We need some love and understanding. We have to find a way to appreciate each other's boundaries. This is the most comfortable and in control I have felt in years — here, living in a tent in the woods, next to the railroad tracks. Here is where I experience the most disconnection from the binding system. I wonder why we can't get parcels

A local look at trans people in homeless shelters

LAYLA MCMURTRIE
Deputy Editor

According to Health Care for the Homeless, one in five transgender people, and 41% of Black trans people, have experienced homelessness. There are very few shelters specifically for trans and gender non-conforming homeless people, and most of the resources available cater towards youth, leaving trans adults suffering. Shelters are no exception to the hate that the LGBTQ+ community is often subject to.

At the Robert J. Delonis Center in Ann Arbor, where there are 56 residential beds, women are placed on the fourth floor and men on the third floor. Often trans people don't feel right with either option, as many feel unsafe in men's shelters due to a higher risk of sexual assault, but can also feel out of place with cisgender women.

Local trans lesbian Sarah Dunn has spent time in the Washtenaw County homeless community since coming out in 2017 and said that she never felt comfortable at Delonis. "I didn't feel safe, even waiting outside, because I

was catcalled. I had some guy trying to put his arm around me," Dunn said. "I was glad that Washtenaw Camp Outreach was able to put me up at a motel that night and then I moved into Purple House the next day, but it was that traumatizing even just waiting out there knowing that I could be preyed on."

Dunn thinks that to prevent behavior like this, shelters should have a zero-tolerance policy for predatory behavior. While Delonis does have a non-discrimination policy and a way for residents to file complaints, it seldom results in aggressors being

exited from the shelter, according to Housing Director Christina Johnson.

When starting her job at Delonis in 2012, Johnson was glad to find out that their rule was already that a client will be placed on the floor matching their gender identity. But, the system is still far from perfect. Currently, the center has no specific protections for trans people, just a community agreement poster that emphasizes safety and respect.

see **SHELTER** next page ➡

A few notes on respect: How to ensure you're treating a trans person with dignity

PHOENIX OAKS
Street Roots vendor

I've noticed that, unfortunately, staff and volunteers who run non-profits that serve poor and houseless folks are often unaware of how to treat transgender community members with basic respect. Some are outright unwilling to use trans people's correct names or pronouns. That was my reason for putting together a presentation that the following tips were taken from.

This lack of respect is especially unacceptable given that trans people make up a highly disproportionate percentage of houseless folks. We face very high rates of discrimination, violence, family and community rejection, harassment and suicide attempts because of transphobia. The last thing struggling trans folks need is to be mistreated in places like shelters, service centers, offices, medical clinics and places where they get food and use restrooms.

I've experienced incessant misgendering and other forms of transphobia by a few people in some of these places. I've also seen trans people get harassed, discriminated against and misgendered by staff and other residents in shelters. I've been told by an employee at a shelter service that trans men can just go to the women's shelter after I raised concerns about trans men and nonbinary people's safety in shelters.

As a trans man, I'd feel extremely uncomfortable and out of place going into a women's shelter (especially since I pass as male and am legally male). At the same time, I'd unfortunately feel unsafe in a men's shelter, too, given how high the risk of sexual

assault would be there. Many people in this community first met me before I started transitioning.

Don't get me wrong — trans men and women should definitely be able to stay in men's and women's shelters respectively according to their correct genders, just as they should be able to use the correct restrooms. At the same time, given the current social climate, I believe that trans, nonbinary and gender nonconforming people need their own shelter or shelter beds that they can go to if they feel safer there. As things are now, the places that serve folks who are struggling the most are often not safe or welcoming to us.

The importance of names and pronouns

- Respect everyone's right to self-identify and express however they wish at any time and in any situation.
- Once known, use ONLY a person's chosen name and pronouns, unless they explicitly want you to do otherwise. This can be the case when a person is still in the process of coming out.
- Don't justify deadnaming (using a person's former name) or misgendering. Apologize and correct yourself if you slip.
- Legal names and genders are often NOT preferred and are not to be considered people's "real" names or genders.
- Don't out anyone without permission.

Actions, questions and statements to avoid

- Unequal, stigmatizing, dehumanizing or awkward treatment such as staring; ceasing communication; deliberate deadnaming or misgendering; sharing medical/anatomical info, old photos or birth name without the

trans person's consent; transphobic jokes or stereotyping; or using mocking or condescending tone with chosen name or pronouns.

- Anything invasive or objectifying about body, presentation, old or new name or appearance, or transition process.
- Pressure to do anything that feels unsafe or dysphoria-inducing such as calling police, going to a place that doesn't feel welcoming, or presenting as assigned gender for school or a family gathering.
- Invalidating trans kids' or youths' needs or identities by claiming that they're too young to know, that trans pre-teens shouldn't go on puberty blockers, or that trans teens shouldn't have hormone therapy, etc.
- Anything that treats trans men as if they're not real men or trans women as if they're not real women. For example, stereotyping trans men as being better than cis men as if they're not real men and masculinity is inherently toxic; treating trans women like they're men invading women's spaces; "We welcome women and trans people" on signs; and surveys that have "male," "female," "trans male," and "trans female" as distinct options instead of "cis male," "cis female," "trans male," and "trans female."
- Regarding nonbinary genders as less real or unreal; refusing to use gender-neutral pronouns or the Mx. honorific; or saying that they/them for one person is grammatically incorrect.
- Falsely claiming that being trans is a mental illness, a trend or a personal choice; falsely claiming that science supports transphobia; or saying that being trans is against one's culture, religion, feminism or beliefs.
- Performative allyship, tokenism



A self-portrait of Phoenix Oaks, originally published in the Street Roots 2019 Holiday Zine.

and inappropriate parading of trans identities.

- Accusing trans people of being unreasonable or overly sensitive in response to their trauma, dysphoria, or unwillingness to take transphobia; blaming trans people's unrelated issues on them transitioning; gaslighting; or saying "not all cis people" when they process their experiences.
- Treating transphobia like a lower-priority problem to address or a less serious/real oppression.
- Arguing that trans people shouldn't be allowed in certain jobs, roles or places for their correct genders, for example, sports teams, restrooms, the military, teaching, raising kids, religious/spiritual leadership and political office; or that trans prisoners or poor people shouldn't be able to have surgery.

Courtesy of Street Roots / INSP.ngo

Hidden struggles of asexuality

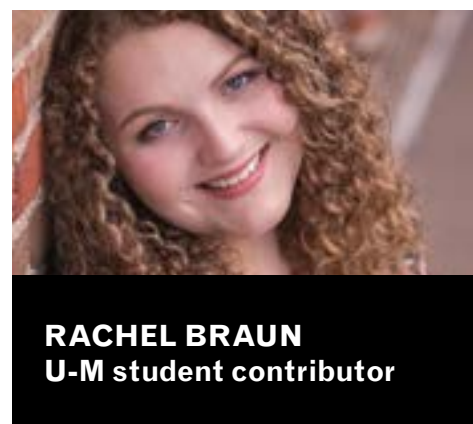
As our society becomes increasingly aware of the prevalence of sexual harassment, one particularly vulnerable group's experiences still remain in the shadows. Asexuality is defined as experiencing little to no sexual attraction to any gender. While being asexual is completely natural, the misconceptions surrounding the identity cause many people to view asexual people, or aces, as broken or less human.

As an asexual person myself, I've witnessed this dehumanization countless times and am now striving to document asexual discrimination, which is called "aphobia." In February 2022, I posted a form titled "A Collective Look on Aphobia" to my aroantic, asexual TikTok, where over 3,000 asexual and aroantic people reported experiencing various microaggressions. The most concerning result was that 15.3% of respondents reported experiencing sexual assault specifically due to their identity.

I found this shocking and couldn't believe I hadn't seen anyone discuss this massive issue. I decided to interview one of these individuals to get a better perspective on the sexual harassment that many aces face.

Julia (she/they) began experiencing sexual abuse long before she learned that there is a word for her identity. She described her encounters with a family member who "took advantage of a lot of my naivety and my 'not feeling very sexual' to try to educate me in ways that were not appropriate."

This experience of "educating on sexuality" isn't uncommon for asexuals and is often used as a tactic for abusive partners to excuse their actions. Julia also shared her struggles in college, where men are notorious for sexual misconduct. "I've had men get really confused and upset when I'd be romantic with them but



RACHEL BRAUN
U-M student contributor

not be sexual with them," she explained.

These issues only increased once Julia realized she's asexual and started disclosing her identity. Many people claimed that asexuality isn't real or that she must have a physical or mental disorder. Even partners who said they were willing to date an asexual person later tried to coerce her into sex or claimed they could "fix" her. "I was dealing with expressing boundaries and then having those boundaries ignored or invalidated," she said.

She also mentioned that this violation of boundaries was more painful than her previous experiences because it felt like a direct attack on her identity.

Julia later shared an encounter with a man she met at a festival. Despite clarifying that she's not comfortable with anything beyond kissing, she was physically overpowered by him.

"He grabbed me and pulled me down to the couch and started trying to engage more sexually," she explained. When she repeated that she's asexual, he started shouting and accusing her of being a liar and leading him on. Julia was eventually able to push him away and escape, but many aces aren't so lucky. In fact, "corrective rape" is one of the main forms of conversion therapy used to "treat" asexuality.

I also asked Julia if she has trouble

finding support as a survivor of sexual abuse due to their asexuality. She explained that many people treat her differently from other survivors because they think her sexuality needs to be corrected. Furthermore, she isn't able to utilize support systems provided by doctors, psychiatrists and therapists because they assume her sexuality is a result of her experiences.

She explained, "A lot of my trauma does get written off as 'you're like this because you're traumatized' rather than 'you're traumatized because you're like this.'" Julia's experience with medical professionals is common within the asexual community. The pathologization of asexuality forces many people to lie or avoid doctors and therapists, furthering the lack of visibility for sexual abuse.

Julia's message for people who don't believe asexuality is real is, "Everybody is having their own experience, and your experience is not universal. Leave people the space to live their own lives."

Julia's experience is just one out of millions, but it gives significant insight into the struggles of asexuality. Between the sexual coercion, medicalization and lack of visibility, being asexual can be an isolating and terrifying experience. Julia and I agreed the best action that can be taken is improved education. By educating about asexuality, we can create a future with greater acceptance, visibility and safety.

As Julia said in her closing remark, "Asexuals have always been here and have always been experiencing discrimination for who they are, and the only way we're gonna make things better is if the queer community works together as a whole to educate and live our lives as brightly and vibrantly as we can."



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Ypsilanti Pride's big return

Ypsilanti Pride is kicking off Pride Month from 4-10 p.m. on June 2 in Depot Town, an event described by coordinator Kenneth Curtis as “a community celebration created with intention and for meaningful connection.”

In 2022, organizers took a break — but the group has plans to make a big return this year and continue to grow moving forward. “Before this season of planning, a lot of the board members from previous years decided to leave the board... I was the only person that stayed on the board,” Curtis said. “I’m wearing a lot of hats right now.”

Ypsilanti’s weekend of pride events will happen from Friday, June 2 through Sunday, June 4, with the big full day of events taking place on Saturday, featuring performances from LGBTQIA+ identifying regional artists such as DJ Myint, Baddie Brooks and Fearless Amaretto.

Curtis is a teacher at EMU Bright Futures and believes that Pride is crucial to show local youth that they can be who they are. “It’s so important because our youth is really just so vibrant and outspoken about their rights and what they want to see inside the schools,” Curtis said. “I think that [Pride] is the only way that we could foster that behavior and that mentality



LAYLA MCMURTRIE
Deputy editor

of if you really want something, you have to go fight for it.”

Baddie Brooks, a recent graduate of Eastern Michigan University and local trans femme vocalist and trumpeter, will be opening the stage with her original music. As they have utilized music as an avenue to express themselves, Brooks and other Pride performers are a prime example to show youth how important authenticity is.

Apart from performers, local vendors at Ypsi Pride will include the Jim Toy Community Center, PFLAG Ann Arbor, Unicorn Feed & Supply, Best in Games, Gay Nerd Goods and Ypsi Art Supply. Other organizations present will consist of a multitude of local non-profits, retail stores, food, arts and crafts and health and services.



Ypsi Pride advertisement outside of Aubree's in Depot Town.

Following the events on June 2, there will be after parties at local arcade Best in Games and speakeasy-style bar Mash. On June 3, Keystone Arcade and Bar will be hosting a Pride Afterglow Party.

“Ypsi Pride represents authenticity by reaffirming queer culture and drawing thousands of folks each year out to express themselves freely among friends and family,” Curtis said, urging the community to attend the event. “Ypsi Pride is a unique Pride

experience. It is authentic, intentional and locally supported. Don’t miss this annual event and Ypsilanti highlight!”



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How Pastor Anna aligns queer advocacy with faith

CHEN LYU
Groundcover contributor

I first met Pastor Anna Taylor-McCants near Liberty Plaza. There was a crowd of volunteers and other people who stopped for the meals her FedUp Food Truck provides. In a place that would otherwise feel desolate, they packed the sidewalk and the benches in the park, conversations and laughter permeating the air.

For Pastor Anna, the first openly queer pastor at Zion Lutheran Church, FedUp was literally a vehicle to carry God’s non-judgemental love to community members who might have felt alienated by conventional church practices.

“I recognize that like this building that you came in for the first time, out there there are these huge steps, those are also barriers,” Anna said. “It is a home for so many people, but also a barrier for so many others who look at this space and think, ‘I don’t matter or I’m wrong or I’m going to hell. I feel bad about myself because of what the church said.’ So they don’t want to be in this space. And that to me is heartbreaking.”

“Part of my job is to go out and find those people and say, ‘I’m sorry that the church hurt you. I’m sorry that the church was wrong. God does love you, you are valuable and you are holy in your whole existence and all of your queerness.’”

Originally from Tennessee, Anna navigated a relatively conservative Christianity landscape and didn’t come out until she was 26. She said she

was fortunate to find the calling in queer theology and identify the denomination she was aligned with. However, she also related deeply with the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ members in the faith community, including her wife, Monique’s struggle to reconcile her gender orientation with her faith when they first met in Philadelphia.

“God was releasing me from that harmful theology into something I was running to that was life-giving,” Anna said. “For [my wife], she just kind of rejected everything. And then it took her a long time, until she met me and found the Lutheran church, to realize maybe God is not who she was taught.”

Zion Lutheran Church was adorned with rainbow heart stickers by Reconciliation in Christ, symbolizing its effort to transform into an all-inclusive church. This journey involves a queer theology teaching series that highlighted Bible stories that manifest God’s unconditional love beyond binary. In Anna’s preaching — from the creation of earth to the Chronos time — nothing was ever binary.

As a faith leader, Anna was instrumental in aiding the transformation to inclusiveness. However, another facet of inclusiveness is to reach the members who don’t welcome the change, albeit a minority in a progressive city. Even in Ann Arbor where residents are no stranger to rainbow flags flying over church buildings, attendees of Anna’s church still run the gamut of the political spectrum. While Anna was uncompromising in defending LGBTQ+ members, she told me she still needed



Above: Faith leaders Sara Cogsil, Kristin McCarthy, Anna Taylor McCants and Julie Winklepeck (left to right). Below: Pastor Anna and her wife, Monique, serving salads from the FedUp Food Truck.

to walk the tightrope occasionally to make her preaching palatable to those who might disagree with her views.

“It’s a balance of loving the people in our congregation who aren’t necessarily ready to fully embrace every color of the pride flag all the time and at the same time, I have to also love people like me who need to hear that and need to hear it from the pulpit, you know, proclamations that they are holy and that God loves them,” Anna said. “I’m trying to care for everyone.”

Outside her pastoral career, Anna is an active and extroverted community member who can be spotted in many public events. She is organizing a mobile showering facility and, further down the road, a brick and mortar cafe as a community “third place” where community members from all walks of life could come in and convene anytime of the day.

“There are no third spaces other than libraries and parks, and even around here you pay money to go to some of the parks,” Anna said. “So we want to

create a third space that is welcoming, because aside from a library, aside from a church building, which most of our buildings are not open 24/7, we want to create another space where people can have their needs met.”

Pastor Anna and her wife Monique will both be attending Ypsi Pride on June 2 and Ann Arbor Pride in August. If you see them, say hello!



Bethlehem United Church of Christ
whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here
423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 734-665-6149
Bethlehem-ucc.org facebook.com/bethlehemucca2
Bethlehem Church is home of the Groundcover office

JUNE 2023 EVENTS AT BETHLEHEM

Please visit the church website at: bethlehem-ucc.org for the most up-to-date calendar and event information.

Sunday Worship Time
10:00 am In-person and via Live Stream and Radio Broadcast

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ANN ARBOR

We seek to...

- follow Jesus
- respect all people
- honor questions
- be real
- nurture community

Sunday @ 10a 517 E. Washington Street fbca2.org
Open to all. Closed to none.

Take action to avoid losing Medicaid coverage!

LINDSAY CALKA
Publisher

Starting in June, Michigan Medicaid beneficiaries will have to renew their coverage to comply with federal legislation.

During the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, many changes were made to Medicaid's eligibility to prevent Medicaid beneficiaries from losing healthcare coverage. Since 2020, there has been a 34.2% increase in Medicaid recipients.

In Michigan, annual renewals will begin again in June 2023 and the first round of terminations of those ineligible will happen July 1. The renewal process will happen on a monthly basis; if you originally enrolled in Medicaid in October, no matter what year your coverage began, your renewal will still happen in October 2023. Passive renewals for the June cohort began in April of this year.

Passive renewals are a mandated process in which the state of Michigan uses the information it already has on file — including income verifications from other programs such as SNAP — to attempt to renew Medicaid recipients without any action on their end. Recipients who were renewed will

receive a letter in the mail stating such. Still, it is estimated that no more than 40% of current Medicaid recipients will be renewed during this phase.

The State of Michigan has taken action to prepare for these changes in order to assist current Medicaid beneficiaries with the redetermination process, and information on the private insurance enrollment process, should they no longer qualify for Medicaid.

One of these actions was an informational webinar held on Wednesday May 17; the Michigan Poverty Task Force facilitated a conversation between Kim Trent, key staffer to the Michigan Poverty Task Force, Zachary Dillinger with the Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services and Nicole Hudson with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

There were three main takeaways from the presentation:

1. Update your information with the state. This can most easily be done through the MI Bridges portal; it is especially important for those who changed addresses or phone numbers during the pandemic.

2. Frequently check your mail and text messages. Notice of passive renewal or a renewal form will be sent

through these avenues.

3. Complete the renewal form as soon as possible upon receipt. This can be done through mail, phone, in the MI Bridges portal or by dropping off the physical form at a DHHS office.

If it is determined that you will lose Medicaid, or you presume you will lose coverage this year, taking action immediately will prevent a lapse of healthcare coverage. Marketplace coverage options can be found at HealthCare.gov. Dillinger emphasized researching if a plan covers your current service providers and calculating not just what your premium cost would be, but also co-pays for appointments and medication.

If you find this process of enrolling for private coverage overwhelming, free local enrollment help can be accessed at LocalHelp.HealthCare.gov. If private options are not affordable for you, subsidies are available. Those ineligible for Medicaid might still be eligible for subsidies to reduce coverage payments to as low as \$10/month. Apply for a subsidy at michigan.gov/staycovered.

Having health insurance is important, not just for when you are sick or hurt, but also to help you stay healthy and avoid big medical bills. It is



important that you take action to get the coverage you need to protect yourself and your family.

Sudoku

★★★★★ 4puz.com

	9		2		8		4	
8	7			3			2	6
			6	4		7	1	
3		8					7	1
	1						6	
6		9				8		2
			1	9		6	2	
2	8				4			1
	6		8		1		7	

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling past monthly issues.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other

Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.

WORD SEARCH

C	O	R	N	M	I	L	L	W	A	S	T	E	P	M
F	S	I	O	V	E	N	T	W	B	K	D	M	A	A
F	I	W	L	P	D	W	P	I	D	I	A	R	P	S
T	L	T	I	F	E	R	G	U	E	L	M	K	I	E
S	K	U	H	T	U	B	E	B	T	N	C	O	L	R
B	M	V	S	K	C	A	S	E	H	A	R	D	E	N
O	I	E	C	H	E	H	L	U	R	O	A	O	O	C
L	L	A	L	T	U	B	I	N	G	E	S	I	H	O
T	L	I	F	T	B	D	N	I	R	G	H	E	C	M
S	G	E	E	I	I	D	G	T	C	C	O	G	A	P
O	T	C	K	K	E	Y	E	D	N	E	P	L	M	U
V	A	I	S	A	G	A	F	A	L	E	W	I	S	T
U	A	K	L	L	E	F	T	X	O	O	N	I	S	E
H	F	N	U	L	A	S	A	R	C	H	U	E	R	R
F	U	S	E	M	R	G	P	N	K	D	T	Y	R	E

WORD BANK:

Gibs	Slack
Hose	Slag
Input	Sling
Keyed	Slue
Kibble	Smelt
Kiln	Stanchion
Lewis	Still
Lift	Switch
Lock	Tap
Maser	Test
Nut	Tew
Ohm	Tie
Oil	Treadle
Pile	Tube
Rack	Tubing
Ram	Tyre
Rope	Unit
Sag	Vane
Shop	Vent
Silk mill	Waste
Skid	Wire

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Income guidelines have INCREASED.
All work is FREE of charge!

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- Air Sealing and Insulation
- Furnace Replacements
- Fresh Air Bath Fan

Income must be at or below 80% area median income (AMI) to qualify:

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Income Limit 80% AMI	\$62,600	\$71,550	\$80,500	\$89,400	\$96,600	\$103,750

Homeowners and renters can apply!

Benefits of Weatherization:

- Comfort
- Lower Utility Bills
- Energy Savings
- Improved Health and Safety

Apply today at bit.ly/Wx-app or call (734) 544-3008

Love in Doublethink

LADI DÄ
Groundcover contributor

Politicians in positions to listen
Twist in visions and stonewalling decisions
Dean Spade, Marsha P., and Rivers
Hold me down ten toes there in the mirror
War paint on my face hide tears of terror
Olay, Maybelline, and Mascara.
Dominated and entangled in violence
But they still feel I should suffer in silence
Racist and anti-poor sentiment
Operate institutional harassment
Prisons, foster care, and public benefits
Taking lives because they can't pay rent.
And yet that Ol'Sly fox still duping fools
Sarcastic politics of hate and half-truths
In the land of Lady Liberty
Hegemonic Masculinity fears me
Because I violate the norms of gender binary
But this month they'll celebrate me
Love.
I get this glow from that heart with a hollow hole
I get this booty with a bump from the beat of a tortured soul
There's just one thing I want you to know
They give my Love in Doublethink I can't let go.

About the author: I Am Ladi Dä (they/ them). My survival depends solely upon my Activism. My art is inspired by the daily experiences of the transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex individuals trapped in the Prison Industrial Complex. It is meant to keep us inspired and remind us that everyone knows: "WE ARE THE STRONGEST INDIVIDUALS IN THE WORLD." Take it from someone who has spent over two decades incarcerated for a crime they did not commit.

Love by Love: "Superhuman"

A column on everyday acts of compassion

MARKONA LOVE
Groundcover vendor No. 590

As I sat at Blake Transit Center, the #26 bus pulled up. I won't forget that bus #26, even though I don't ride it, because what stepped off that bus completely altered my perceptions of reality ... my reality ... everybody's realities: A Caucasian man ... maybe 20-30 years old, physically wasted, slight build, maybe 80 pounds, with alabaster skin, whose whole body looked as if it wanted to curl into a tight ball. His chest and lap were strapped into an electric wheel-chair, head completely slumped over, chin to chest; right hand curled, awkward fist, left hand curled with left thumb loose to work the joystick controller for the chair. No other movement of his body or any apparent communication abilities.
He was the most courageous person I have ever seen ... every minute he's a real Superhuman.
I saw my own reality and then thought, "I've had a situation of great isolation, but it was merely a sliver of the complete isolation our Superhuman is in himself." So, in a nutshell, I'm just a big crybaby. How can anyone feel sorry for themselves while special human beings like this man can't even complain?
People surrounded the bus entrance waiting to board, then stood five feet

back, not just to give my new Superhero space to exit, but they almost all purposely looked away, turning completely from him. "WOW!" my mind and soul gasped. All I could think is, "How could anyone possibly be more isolated from, not just human contact, but from the entire functionality of society?"
I watched this Superhuman, who must assuredly be going home. Never had I seen anybody near his full level of apparent disability, without an assistant. As I continued watching him, expecting him to go home, he turned the block and headed up and into the Ann Arbor Library. This man had business to get done!
Again, I pondered, "This incredible human being is in a world completely of his own making. The sheer power that his mind possesses to construct that world from a position of passivity could teach a lesson that might save humanity."
And this is coming from a relatively minorly disabled person who gets it. Myself, I am isolated for different reasons, but worlds apart from his level of isolation. I'm not talking about sympathy, pity or some kind of condescension. This is about the tremendous courage, dexterity, awareness and wisdom to move on like that.
This person navigates through maximum adversity, alone and isolated as

if in an entirely different world. With intimate conversation, we might glean a better understanding from the residents of his world who might communicate wisdom attributed through the experiences of such a world of isolation. Navigating that complete isolation with absolute singularity is rare at best. No casual conversation here. Stop staring and start opening your hearts and minds.
We have so much to learn from this incredibly gifted individual. It might possibly be the lesson that could save humanity; it's possible that all our problems could be reasoned justly by finding humanity's best side.
Personally, I go on getting worse, driving on through every kind of pain all at once. Nobody wants to know it all or go there, be there at that level. I am destined to die in this obscurity with all this hidden/ignored pain.
Man, oh man, do I want to ramble on about this, but the truth is he's the one with the knowledge. So let's help him, and others going through that intense reality and awareness, share this knowledge ... they could save us!
So why don't we start by treating them like our Superhumans because they are ... Make all the concessions we can possibly make and give them the opportunity to teach us.
I'll be looking here, there, and everywhere, to meet my/our Superhero. I

want to know how the rest of us see him.
Sincerely, All the love from MarKona Love (with Kona Love)
Author's Note: We all need to start sacrificing more, to start helping all these special human beings, so they can help us find a way to Peace, Love and Acceptance ... FINALLY! The people that are looked down upon in society — the homeless, disabled, low income and our Elders — these are my special human beings, the ones who have felt, witnessed, and shared with others alike all about the disparagement in humanity. That's most likely where they get the empathy that drives them to donate when they have nothing, volunteer when weak, ill, and/or exhausted, be there for a fallen fellow human being and to show them how to become a "Special Human Being."
Ken Parks, a mentor to me, made a point after strongly supporting my article "What the Street Took," and took the position that the article should then be "What the Street gave Us (Special Human Beings) ... Empathy and Compassion." There you are Ken, my close friend, great writer for Groundcover, and a leader in activism for all in despair. Please learn of the many, many years of his dedication to the disenfranchised. He is our Superhuman, and Ann Arbor and Detroit should be raising him up high.



Exist and let exist

D.A.
Groundcover contributor

When I hear any language or terms that are negative and/or dehumanizing, I think to myself, there are things that we all have thought about and/or have even entertained in our own imaginations that we will never reveal. Some have even acted on them, if only once. It is not our job to judge anyone that is just being themselves. That includes anyone who chooses to identify as a person within the LGBTQ community in our world. I prefer to just simply say that although we are similar in many ways, we are all individuals.
I do not agree that anyone or anything that a person or numerous people fear, disagree with, or simply just reject because they do not understand, should suffer or come under any form of attack or assault. The realm of the unknown consists of many reactions among people. It would be wise to respectfully and humbly ask about what you don't understand. Listen to what they are saying as an individual.
Not all biologically born females and males who identify as heterosexual are the same. What is good or said to be normal to one may feel offensive and excluding to another who identifies as LGBTQ. Hatred and violence should be replaced with love and guidance.
I had a friend who identified as gay who used to get chased by some of the boys in my neighborhood. When they caught him, he would be carried to these big beige trash dumpsters and thrown in. I would run over and help him get out of the dumpster. They also called him offensive names while making insulting references as well. He would literally cry on my shoulders as I embraced him with a hug assuring him of my unconditional love for him. These attacks added to the hurt he was experiencing as his mother openly mistreated and rejected a close, loving relationship with him.
I had just as much fun — maybe more — with this friend as any other when we spent time together. I was the one person that he could tell about the then secret relationship he was having. He'd be so happy to say things to me he could not say otherwise at that time in his life. His face just lit up as he'd be smiling and talking about his partner back then. We'd crack our sides laughing together about those embarrassing moments in relationships.
I witnessed how he went through many struggles, suffering from emotional, mental and physical anguish.

I know that many will come out after this article, and hopefully we will be at a place where LGBTQ persons will be able to express themselves without harm being actuated upon them.
LGBTQ people require food, water, shelter to survive just like any other human being. People, let's stop putting our opinions before someone else's well-being.
Being wicked and deceitful is not the answer either. I know of people who say that they are holy Christians, yet, openly curse LGBTQ individuals behind their backs. The Almighty God that I understand is a loving, forgiving, merciful God. He is the only one who can justly judge. So do me and a lot of others a favor and check out your own self before you point a finger. We all too will be judged by God Almighty.
On that note, all I'm saying is if you are compelled by your faith and/or beliefs, it is better if you offer them what you believe and leave it up to that person to choose after that. We barely have what it takes to change the things about us that we want to change and work at. Not one thing hardly ever comes or manifests overnight or in a day. So let's begin to become people who will be examples of love and civility.
I am very grateful for the relationship me and my friend had then. I have not seen my friend for many years now and miss him very much. The last time I saw him was on the bus in the city he and I lived in at that time. We had lost contact, then were reunited again that day.
He had embraced his lifestyle and identified as femme by way of his garments and apparel. He also wore some facial cosmetics. He seemed to be at peace, not bothered by the past things. I felt relief for him. I will always love him unconditionally.
Finally, remember we may reveal our dislike or distaste, or just our lack of understanding new and/or what is unfamiliar. Unless it causes any injury to yourself or others, all we can do is exist and let exist.

➡ BACK from page 3

of sovereign land for community living. I can't help but think that this would greatly reduce homelessness on the streets along with the crime, hunger, health issues, lack of safety, and law enforcement work that often come with that homelessness. It might lighten the burden that these problems lay on society.
I imagine a land-sovereign world where we would be taking care of each other and our communities, as a community. There's lots of talk about this, there have been some small communes or even other larger experiments, but we've never been more in need of these sincere efforts. Nobody has yet to put this vision into practice on a large scale. We don't need one, no, we need many — a completely new sector in our society, a multi-economic-class coalition. The true necessity is in the design of the structure. We need a complete Multi-Economic Eco-Village.
The "Michigan EcoVillage," under development in Southeast Michigan, is a model of that vision. Their EcoVillage project has home models varying from \$180,000 to \$900,000+ and 50 affordable housing units. The village will be using only solar electricity and one-third of the property will be dedicated to food production. The development will be a certified "Living Building Challenge," an international sustainable building standard that requires buildings to produce more energy than they are using. Since housing in our nation causes approximately 20% of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions, the ecovillage's developers and supporters hope that this project can serve as a blueprint for similar net-zero communities around the country.
It's time; the government has to see the obvious solution. Appropriate workable land, old/seized farms, maybe land where the presence of residents would be beneficial to the local economy ... I can go on and on about the opportunities. I could also go on and on about the specifics of how our government/political system is forcing us into a two class society. There is no saving the middle class from that system, so we create our own more sure and acceptable standard of living. We need to get back to a communal way of living, where we start to live and respect

each other, as when villages functioned similar to a family. It could get us back to caring for and working with our neighbors — all our neighbors.
I am also starting a non-profit called "Kona's Edge," which will help repair personal vehicles owned by homeless people who utilize said vehicle as their primary source of income, and provide storage units, gas vouchers, registration, insurance and driver's license renewal for homeless people in transition. Another program I'd like to start with my friend and fellow Groundcover writer Ken Parks is "CoCar" Cooperative Car Sharing, in which small groups would share costs for using vehicles to make money with delivery jobs, etc.
I'm so tired of alarmists sounding the bells. Socialism, Communism, Anarchy... it all sounds like bullshit to me. All are used as excuses to avoid the obvious benefits that communal housing provides to all of society. There is no true pure form of government; Social Security, Food Stamps, and Medicare are all socialist concepts, and all have had great benefits to society. But people of higher income don't understand what things would look like for them if those programs didn't exist. They need to see how changing the current society will benefit society as a whole.
Communities have to come together because of the government's ignorance. Their objectives are contrary to our solution.
This is your call to action. We are way overdue for any real progress. Bring it together, people, and let's start raising our voices and demanding that our government appropriate suitable property.
This article only scratches the surface of what is and can be community living. If you would like more details about the local community housing project, you can visit "Michigan EcoVillage" online to get a full description of their version. To find more information on community living in general, look up CoHousing or Community Housing on the internet.
We need support to persuade our government to appropriate land to support the building of these supportive communities. So, some of you already know the drill... Call your Congressman, Congresswoman, and state legislators. But beyond that, most of all this needs the local community support, and that means educating your local officials. Now (or really yesterday!) is the time for action — to start walking, to stop talking ... we've talked, now let's do!



Banana power muffins

MIRA SIMONTON-CHAO
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:

2-3 very ripe bananas
 1/3 cup melted butter
 1/2 tsp baking soda
 A pinch of salt
 1/2 cup white sugar
 1 large egg, beaten
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
 1 tbsp chia seeds
 1 tbsp ground flax seed
 1/4 cup chocolate chips
 1/4 cup peanut butter
 (optional) 1 tbsp maple syrup
 (optional) 1 tsp cinnamon

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and butter a muffin pan
2. Mash the bananas with a fork and add your 1/3 cup of butter. Mix until completely smooth.
3. Mix in the 1/2 tsp baking soda and pinch of salt then stir in the 1/2 cup white sugar, beaten egg, and vanilla extract followed by the 1 1/2 cups flour.
4. Follow this by adding in your one



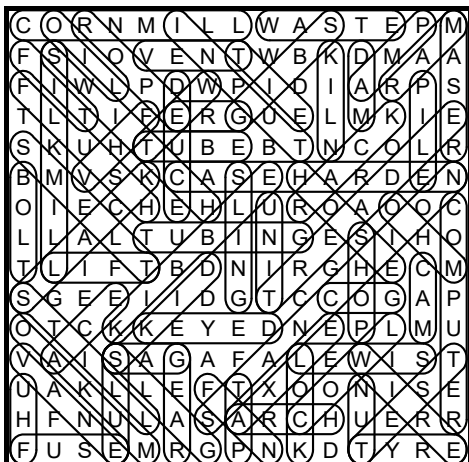
tbsp chia seeds, one tbsp ground flax seeds, 1/4 cups chocolate chips, 1/4 cup peanut butter, and, if you're so inclined, one tbsp maple syrup and 1 tsp of cinnamon.

5. Bake the muffins! Spoon out your batter into the muffin tin then bake for 20-25 mins (make sure to start checking on the muffins at about the 15 mins mark!) You can test to see if your muffins are done by inserting a toothpick or wooden skewer in the center of a muffin. The muffins are done when the toothpick comes out dry!

6. Remove from oven and cool. Pop the muffins out and enjoy!

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

1	9	3	2	6	8	5	4	7
8	7	4	1	3	5	9	2	6
5	2	6	4	9	7	1	8	3
3	4	8	6	5	2	7	9	1
7	1	2	3	8	9	4	6	5
6	5	9	7	1	4	8	3	2
4	3	1	9	7	6	2	5	8
2	8	7	5	4	3	6	1	9
9	6	5	8	2	1	3	7	4



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St. Francis of Assisi Parish

"If God were your Father, you would love me,
for I came from God and am here;
I did not come on my own, but he sent me."
+ Christ Jesus (John 8:42)

Come Worship With Us!

Mass Schedule

Saturday 5 pm (English) & 7 pm (Spanish)

Sunday 8:30 am, 10:30 am,
12:30 pm, 5 pm

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